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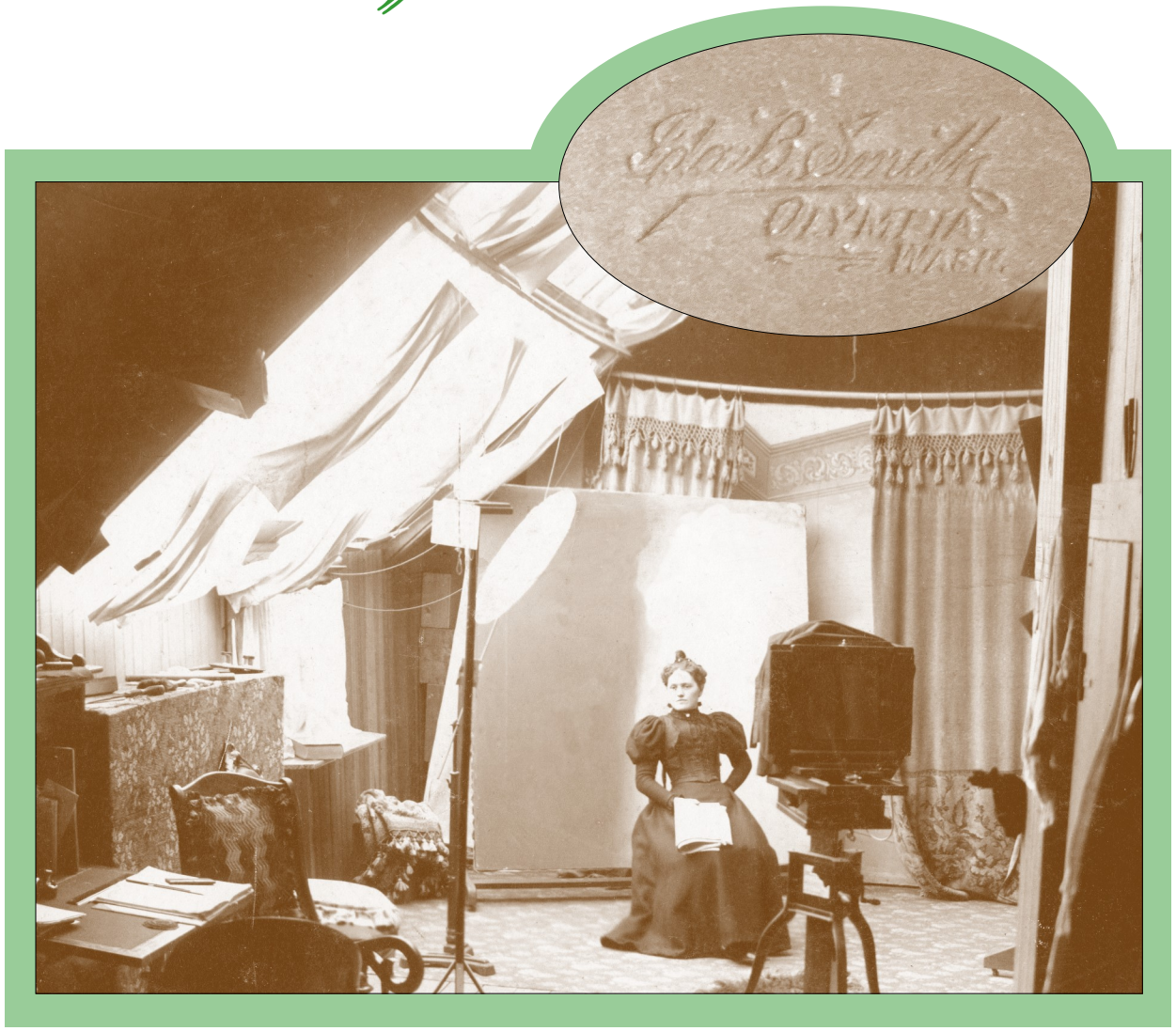

Ida B. Smith: A Photographic Mystery

Touring the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad

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Touring the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad

James S. Hannum, M.D.

In 1873, when the Northern Pacific Railroad completed its first segment of track (between Kalama and Tacoma) in Washington Territory, inhabitants of Olympia and Tumwater were very disappointed. The chosen route for the new line had bypassed those communities. Instead, the line stretched northeast from Tenino, passing through Rainier and Yelm, and then curved northwest to enter Tacoma.

As a result, a consortium of Thurston County residents, mostly from Olympia and Tumwater, developed a narrow-gauge railroad that ran from West Olympia, through Tumwater, to Tenino. Called the Olympia & Tenino Railroad, it went into operation in 1878. Although the line changed its name to the Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad in 1881, the level of service it provided never improved beyond that of a second-class carrier. In addition, because the Northern Pacific Railroad was a standard-gauge line, Olympia & Tenino Railroad freight cars could not be interchanged with that line at Tenino. Passengers to and from Olympia and Tumwater also had to transfer between the two railroads at Tenino.

These problems appeared to have been resolved about 1890, when three standard-gauge railroads made plans to enter Olympia. The first of these, the Northern Pacific Railroad, was the most successful. It built a branch line (the Tacoma, Olympia & Grays Harbor Railroad) through Lacey, Olympia, and on through Gate to Aberdeen.

The second line was the Port Townsend Southern Railroad. It purchased the Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad and widened its right-of-way to standard-gauge. In 1902, it came under control of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

The third railroad, the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad (which here will be abbreviated as "P&PS"), is the subject of this article. Controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad through a subsidiary, the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company, it was a failed venture. Although most of its Thurston County right-of-way was purchased and graded, no track was ever laid. No P&PS trains ever ran upon it.

A precise and concise history of the P&PS appears in *Union Pacific Northwest*. Describing the Oregon Railway

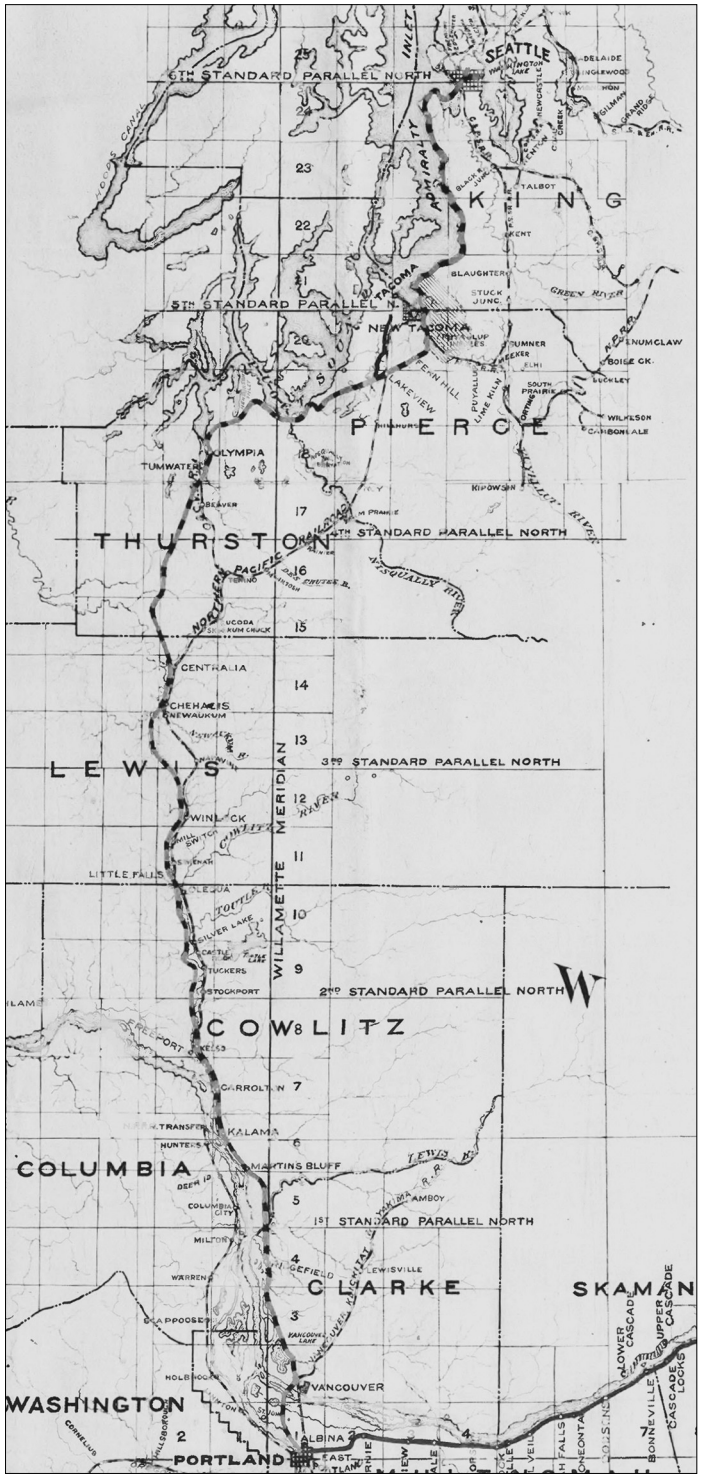
& Navigation Company, the book narrates: "With Spokane and the Palouse region fairly well taken care of with respect to rail service from Portland and the east, the UP turned its attention to the Portland-Tacoma-Seattle corridor in the western portion of Washington State. UP first studied a line to Seattle, possibly as far north as Vancouver, Canada, in 1888 and surveyors were dispatched to the area early in 1889. Preliminary lines were run from Portland to Tacoma and Seattle, and from Chehalis to Port Townsend.

"In anticipation of UP's interest, construction contractors Kilpatrick Bros. & Collins had incorporated the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad Company (in Oregon) on July 29, 1889, with authority to locate and build between Portland and Port Townsend. Their efforts were rewarded when Union Pacific obtained control of the P&PS shortly thereafter and amended its charter to authorize a line to Seattle rather than Port Townsend. UP started the process to secure an Act of Congress authorizing construction of a bridge over the Columbia River at Vancouver, Washington, so that its trains could run directly to and from Portland.

"The route surveyed and selected for the P&PS generally stayed within hailing distance of the Northern Pacific's right-of-way between Kalama and Centralia (the NP's line from Kalama south to Vancouver had not yet been built), but diverged in a northerly direction from the latter point to reach Olympia and American Lake. At this station (American Lake), UP planned to connect with the Tacoma & Lake City Railroad & Navigation Company, which had already constructed a line from Tacoma. Between Tacoma and Seattle, a line along Puget Sound was adopted, although consideration had been given to the inland route which is utilized today.

"Construction on the P&PS began in May of 1890 with completion tentatively scheduled for December 31, 1891. A total of 184 miles of railroad was to be built between Portland and Puget Sound at a projected cost, including the bridge over the Columbia, of just over $8 million. P&PS secured 151 miles of the right-of-way by purchase or condemnation, with the remaining to be acquired as needed. About this time, James J. Hill decided that his Great Northern Railway, which had not yet reached Seattle, ought to have access to Portland to protect its interests against the NP and UP. Union Pacific, which was having some trouble financing the Seattle project, sold half interest in the P&PS to GN in October 1890 in return for Hill's agreement to pay half the construction costs.

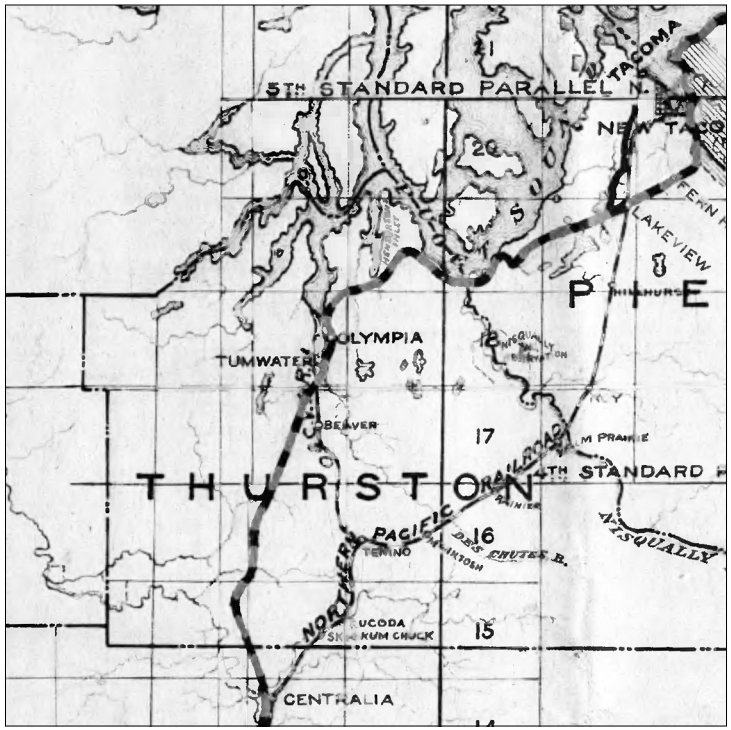
"Unfortunately, the project was poorly managed by the UP, and it became obvious late in the year that the surveys were faulty and the cost estimates badly understated. UP's debt load at the time was already burdensome and finding more funding for the P&PS proved impossible. Hill, who abhorred sloppy construction, did not



***Left**: Image 1. The surveyed route of the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad (P&PS) between Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. From the* 1890 Union Pacific System Map of Lines Comprising the Pacific Division. *Image courtesy of the Washington State Digital Archives.*

***Opposite**: Image 2. An enlargement of the previous map, showing the surveyed route of the P&PS in Thurston County.*

wish to continue at his sole expense, so work on the P&PS ceased abruptly on December 16, (1890) after some $2 million had already been spent. By this date 55% of the clearing, 25% of the grading and 13% of the tunnel work had been finished, along with preliminary work on the Seattle terminal. Union Pacific's financial woes increased in the next few years, preventing a resumption of P&PS construction and causing the project to be abandoned completely. Northern Pacific later purchased the right-of-way between Kalama and Vancouver and used a good deal of it (although by no means all) for its main line which opened in 1903. Remnants of P&PS construction, such as finished grades and trestles, were left intact for many years until the encroachment of civilization



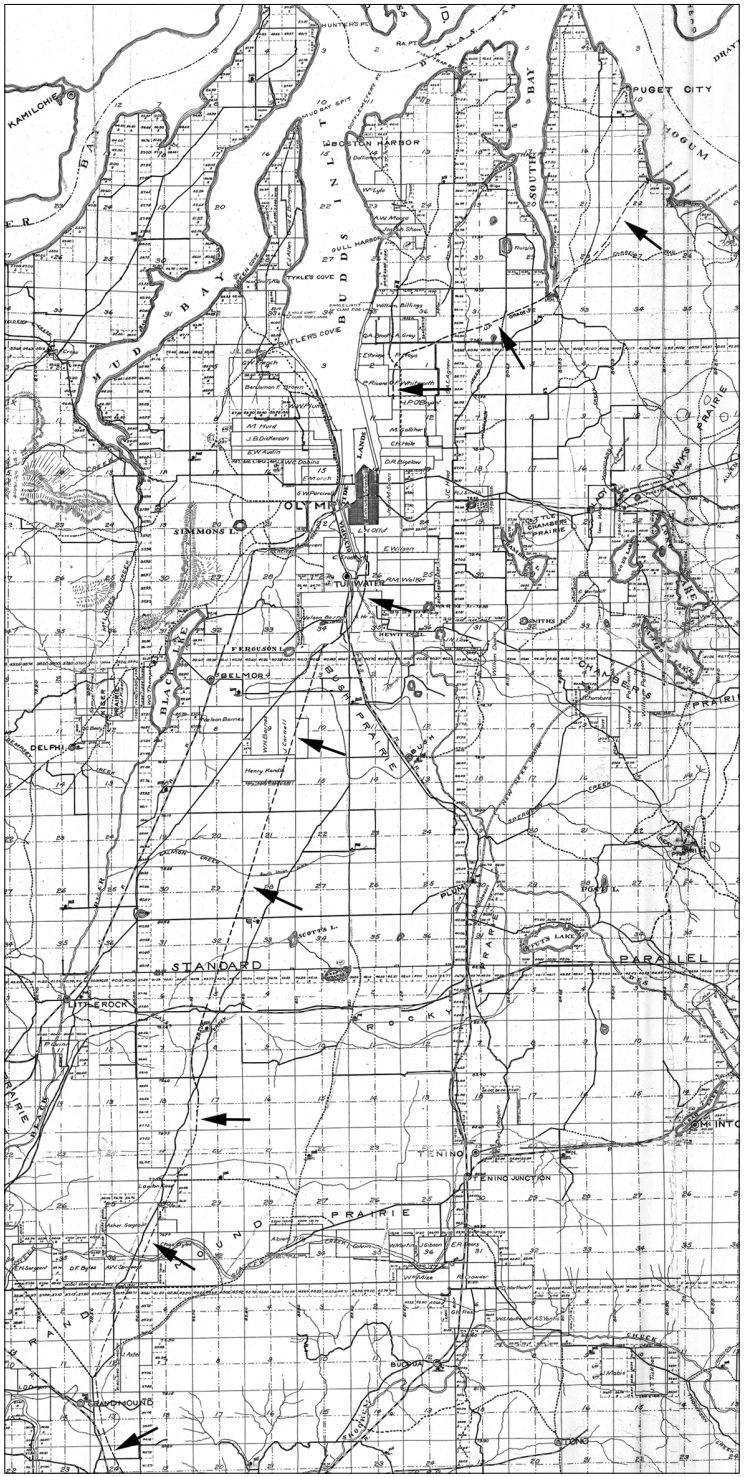
erased them from the landscape. The Milwaukee Railroad also used several miles of the grade north of Chehalis for its Tacoma-Centralia-Chehalis extension (now part of the Chehalis & Western), and UP even used a little when it built its Olympia Branch in 1915. The right to bridge the Columbia River was transferred to the Northern Pacific and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle (including some preliminary stonework on the piers) which built the bridge in 1908."[1]

The incorporation of the P&PS in Washington Territory was filed on November 8, 1889 (three days before statehood). H. L. Tibbals Jr., was appointed its agent, residing at Port Townsend.

Amended papers were filed August 26, 1890, at which time the final routing through Olympia, to Seattle, was resolved. When the amendment was recorded, Charles F. Adams (a descendant of U.S. presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams) was president, and W. W. Cotton was secretary of the line.[2]

The unfinished P&PS right-of-way remained intact for several years after construction of the line was halted late in 1890. Subsequently, in addition to the Thurston County segments acquired by the Milwaukee and Union Pacific Railroads, various other portions of the languishing P&PS grade came under control of the Seattle & Montana Railroad, the Northwestern Improvement Company, the Thurston County Sheriff, the Portland & Seattle Railway (later renamed the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway), the Olympia Southern Railway, the Olympia Terminal Railway, and Thurston County (which used part of the P&PS grade to build the most southern part of Case Road). Many of the intricacies of those transactions will be described in a separate section at the end of this article.

A good place to begin a tour of the old P&PS grade begins at the southern border of Thurston County. The tour proceeds north through Tumwater and Olympia, and then swings northeast toward Nisqually Reach. Current-

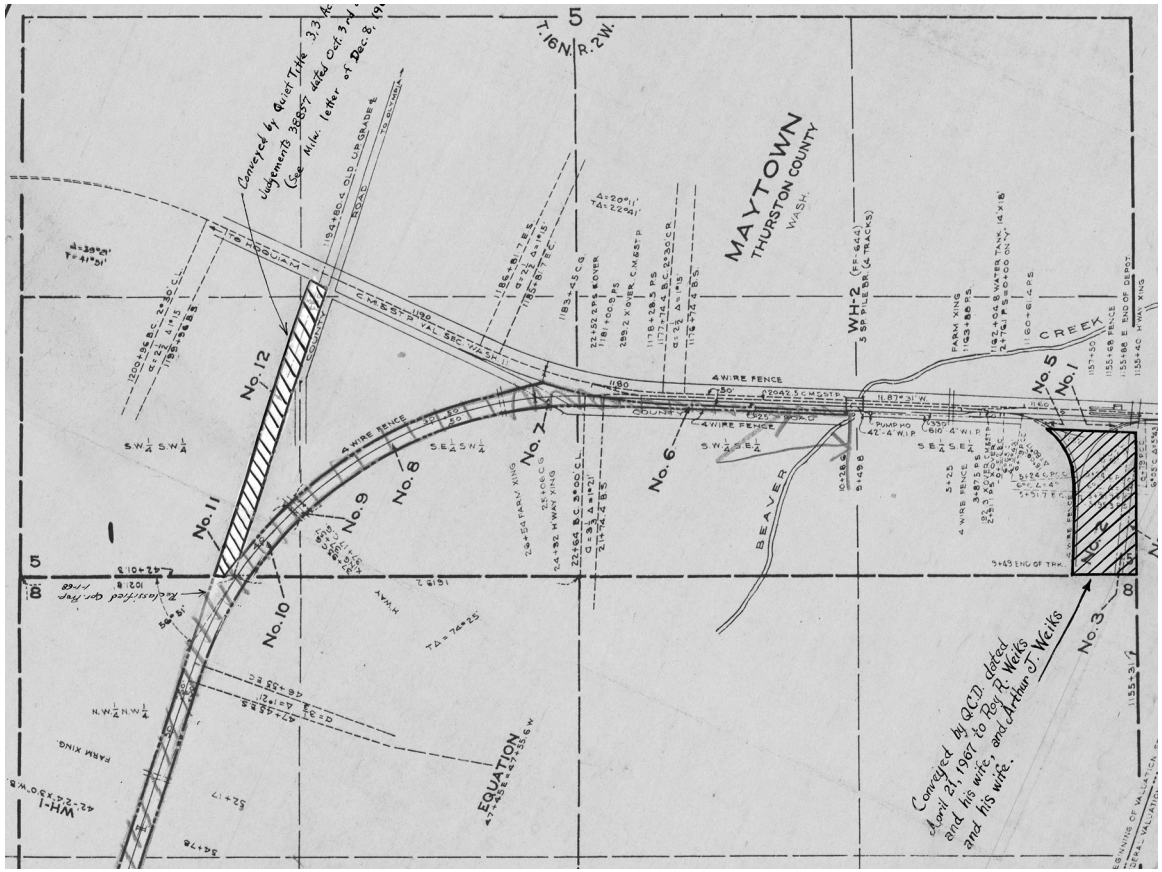


***Left**: Image 3. Part of the 1909* The County Engineer's New Road Map of Thurston County, Washington. *Most of the P&PS right-of-way is visible and labelled as "U. P. Grade." Image courtesy of the Washington State Digital Archives.*

***Opposite**: Image 4. The area immediately west of Maytown, from the Milwaukee Railroad Valuation map for Washington Valuation Section 20, Sheet 1, dated June 30, 1918. Segments No. 11 and 12 of the old P&PS right-of-way were obtained by the Milwaukee Railroad via a deed written August 12, 1913 and recorded in Thurston County Deed Book 88, page 138. The grantor was the Olympia Terminal Railway Company, which (on that date) owned that part of the old P&PS grade. Image courtesy of the Washington State Archives.*

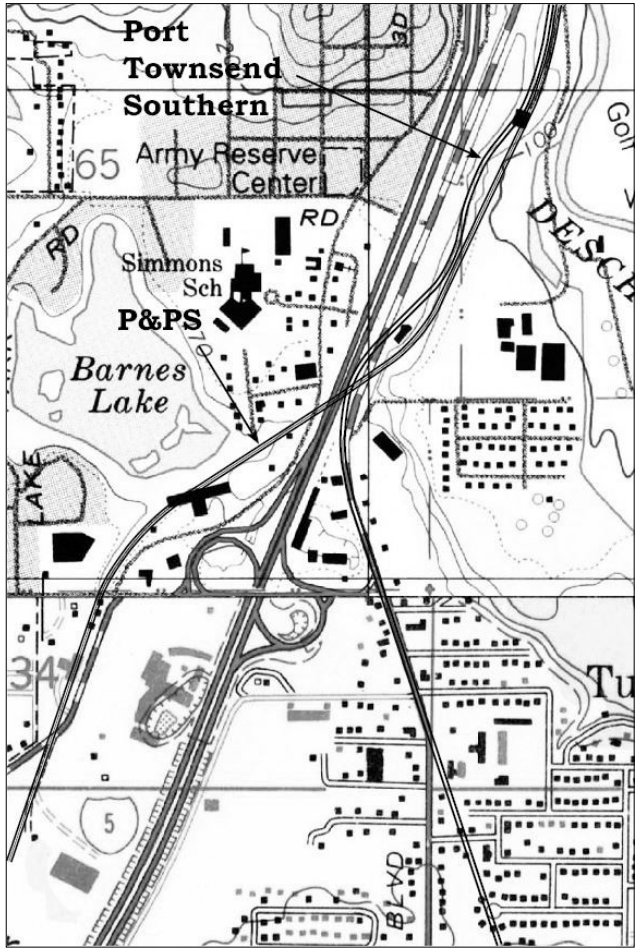
ly, the right-of-way at the junction of Thurston and Lewis Counties is occupied by a short-line railroad (Rainier Rail), a successor to the Milwaukee Railroad. That track leads north to the area immediately west of Maytown.

From Maytown Road, west of Maytown, the P&PS grade



ran northeast, straight as an arrow, to a point immediately west of the current junction of Trosper Road and Littlerock Road. Immediately north of Maytown Road, the most southern part of Case Road follows the former P&PS right-of-way for approximately one mile. At that point, Case Road diverges toward the northeast while the P&PS grade continues straight ahead. Farther north, the abandoned grade crosses Interstate 5 in two places: the first is approximately 0.5 mile north of the 93rd Avenue interchange; the second is at the position of the Israel Road overpass.

Nearing Trosper Road, in Tumwater, the P&PS grade was located immediately west of the north end of Littlerock Road. Don Trosper, a well-known Tumwater historian, recalls information about this area recounted by his grandfather (William R. Trosper) to Don's father (Robert W. Trosper). When William R. Trosper (nicknamed Will) was a child, the P&PS grade could still be seen in a cut passing under Trosper Road. Some residents used it to dispose of refuse. That cut had been filled in prior to Don's childhood.



That particular cut was probably the scene of a wagon accident in 1904. The July 4, 1904 *Morning Olympian* reported: "Will Trosper, residing beyond Tumwater, met with a serious accident yesterday afternoon, while hauling a load of malt from the Tumwater brewery home to feed his stock.

"The county road crosses the old Union Pacific grade at an elevation above the grade of about fifteen feet. The bridge has no railings at the side, and just as the team was on the bridge, one of the horses, which is blind, shied and forced the other horse off the bridge.

"Wagon and both horses went crashing to the ground, but Mr. Trosper jumped when he saw the danger and escaped injury for the time being. . . . The span is about forty feet long, and is over a cut made by the rail-

***Top**: Image 5. Part of a United States Geological Survey map of part of Tumwater near the Trosper Road interchange of Interstate-5. The author has added the rights-of-way of the P&PS and Port Townsend Southern Railroad. Image courtesy of USGS.*

***Bottom**: Image 6. The view facing northeast behind the business at 1677 South 2nd Avenue, in Tumwater. The slightly elevated grade now no longer exists where the WSDOT Materials Laboratory has been constructed, in the distance. Author's 2022 photograph.*

road graders about one mile south of Tumwater near the old slaughter house."[3]

A later article in the *Washington Standard* added further information about the accident: "W. R. Trosper has again sued the county for $300 damages for alleged injuries received by his team falling through a bridge across the Union Pacific cut on the road between Tumwater and Black Lake. He lost a load of malt, broke his wagon, and sustained personal injury from a kick by one of his horses."[4] The road from Tumwater to Black Lake probably is the one that passed through Belmore and is visible on the previously presented *Thurston County Engineer's Map*.

North of Trosper Road, the P&PS grade curved toward the northeast. It passed behind the building currently located at 1677 South 2nd Avenue in Tumwater. Farther northeast, an elevated right-of-way on the southeast side of Barnes Lake has been obliterated by construction of the WSDOT Materials Laboratory.

Continuing northeast, the P&PS grade crossed under a bridge carrying the Port Townsend Southern Railroad. The bridge was located at a position currently about halfway between Interstate 5 and Capitol Boulevard. No trace of that place of crossing can be found today.

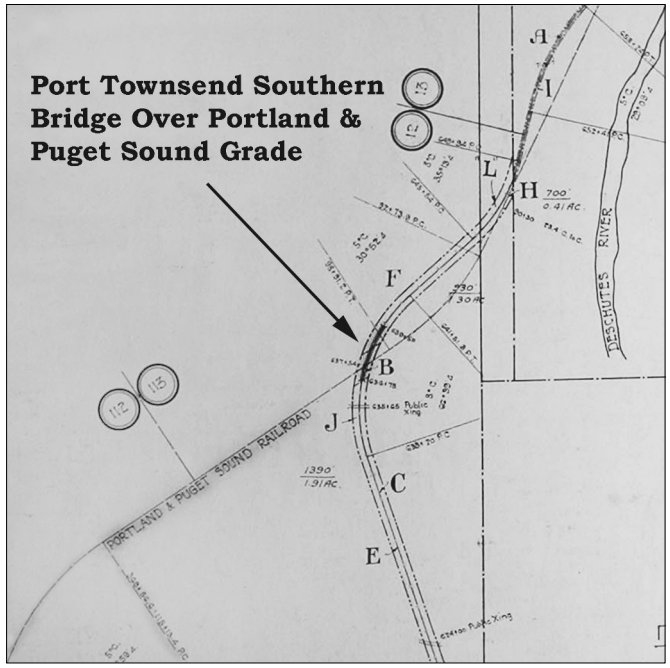
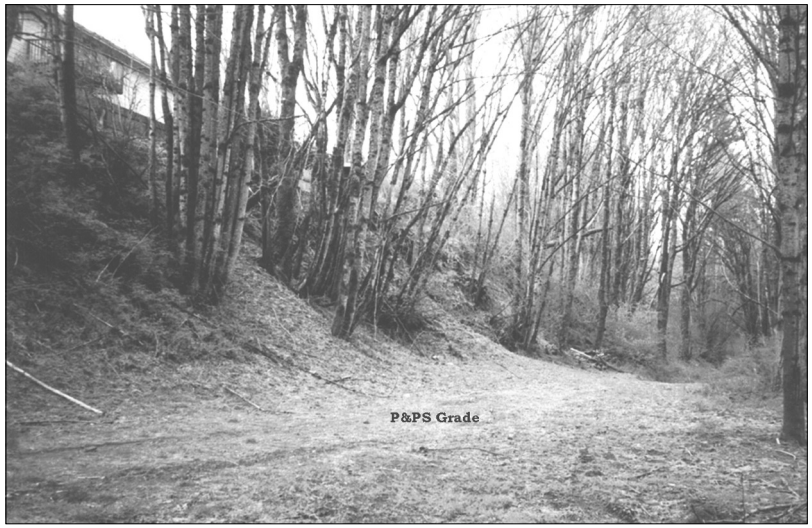


Image 7. Part of Tumwater, from Port Townsend Southern Railroad, Right of Way Plat, Tenino to Olympia, Sections 34 and 35, Township 18 North, Range 2 West, page 14. Image courtesy of the personal collection of Jim Frederickson, housed at the Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive, Burien, Washington.

Beyond the bridge, the P&PS right-of-way curved north and lay on the east side of the Port Townsend Southern (PTS) grade. The PTS was elevated significantly higher than the P&PS. Farther north, the two grades diverged, with the P&PS crossing the Deschutes River immediately south of the Olympia Brewery brewhouse on Custer Way.

After crossing the Deschutes River, the P&PS grade followed a deep cut east of the brewhouse and passed un-



***Above**: Image 8. Northeast of the bridge seen in the previous image, this is a view looking north, showing the P&PS grade situated downhill, east of Capitol Boulevard, in Tumwater. The address for the building at the top of the hill is 4800 Capitol Boulevard. Author's 2006 photograph.*

***Below**: Image 9. The view north toward the tunnel under Capitol Boulevard. Author's 2006 photograph.*

der what is now Custer Way. Subsequently, that part of the P&PS right-of-way near Custer Way was utilized by the Olympia Terminal Railway when it built its line to East Olympia in 1915 (the Olympia Terminal Railway was sold to the Union Pacific Railroad in 1916). This part of the P&PS right-of-way is still in active use.

Continuing north, the P&PS right-of-way entered a tunnel that exists today, passing under Capitol Boulevard. By December 1890, due to financial considerations, construction of the tunnel had been halted. The *Washington Standard* reported: "Workmen are engaged in propping up the entrance of the Tumwater tunnel, presumably for the winter, as it is understood that forward work is for the present postponed."[5]

By the next year, the tunnel was being used for an unintended purpose. The *Washington Standard* reported: "The Union Pacific Railroad tunnel, near Tumwater, is being largely utilized

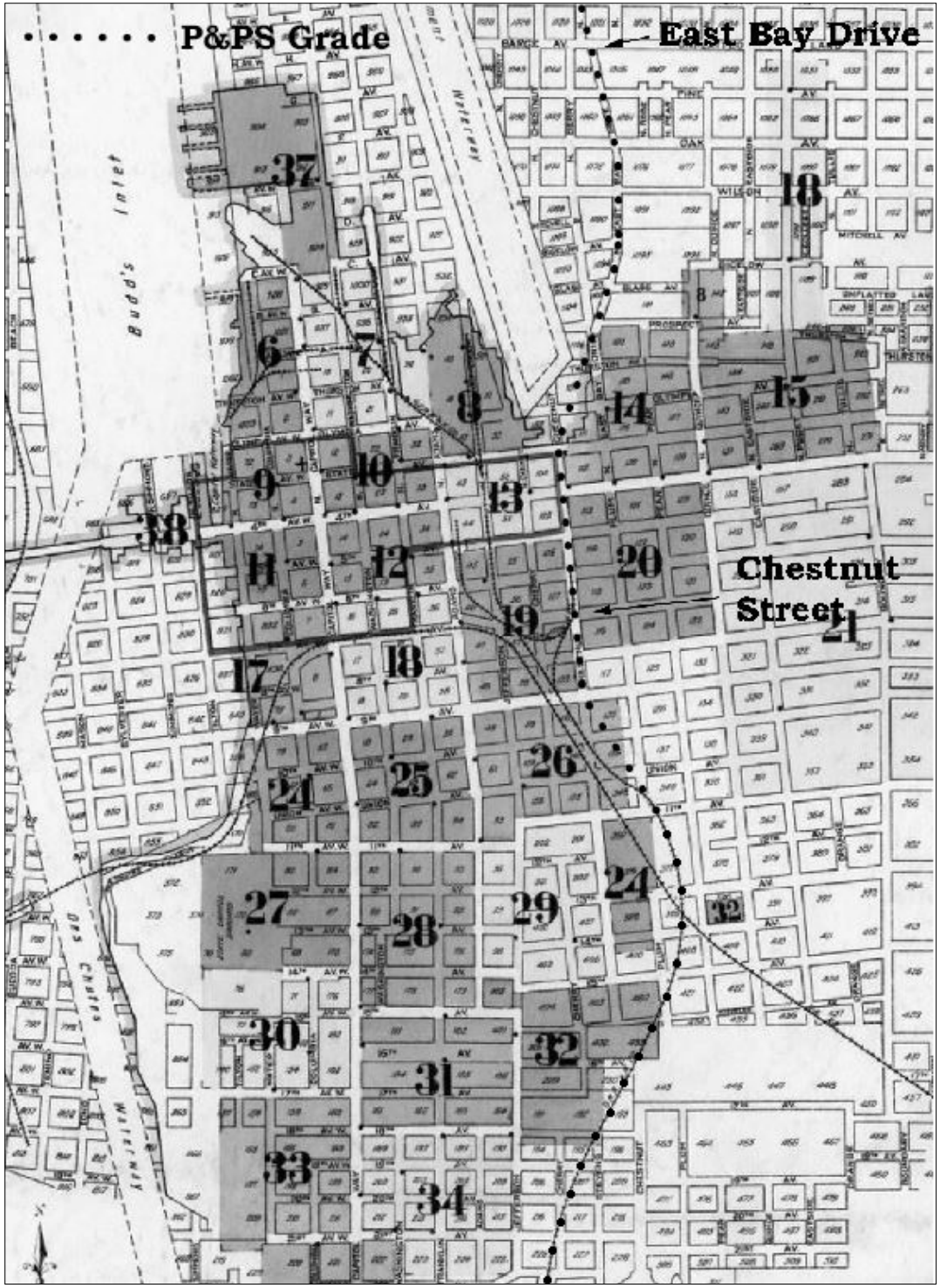
by tramps as a lodging house. It affords a splendid shelter from the inclement weather."[6]

The P&PS right-of-way north of the tunnel crossed the proposed route surveyed by the Northern Pacific Railroad. In May 1890 there was competition between the construction crews of the two lines as each tried to achieve the more favorable grade. The *Washington Standard* reported: "The Union Pacific began work on the grade at Moxlie Creek Thursday morning, on the Connoly block, just west of the pumping-house of the water company. About a dozen scrapers were used and the hillside was soon excavated to the grade established by that company. This is the point where the Northern Pacific will cross its rival's track, and the work yesterday was to obtain precedence in fixing the height of the grade."[7]

The Olympia City Council passed Ordinance 446 in August 1890, which specified the route for the P&PS within the city limits, as they existed that year. Starting in the south, the ordinance read: "Commencing at Pacific Street [now 11th Avenue] at or near the intersection with Plum Street, running then in a generally northwardly direction upon or in the vicinity of Plum or Chestnut Street. Said company shall have the right of locating its line of railway across all streets and alleys, running parallel with First and Pacific Streets, and also in and along either Plum or Chestnut Streets, or in the alleys in the blocks adjoining said streets within said city of Olympia, and in and along Front Street through Sebree's Addition, and also through Simmons' Subdivision of Block C of Sebree's Addition."[8]

Another City Council ordinance (396) suggests that Chestnut Street was chosen as the specific route through this part of Olympia, and that the P&PS had tentative plans to build its Olympia station somewhere on that street. That ordinance granted a franchise to the Olympia Railway Company, a street railway that ceased to exist after 1892. The document mentions that the street railway would be located: ". . . upon Chestnut Street from Fourth Street south to such a point as the depots of the Union Pacific Railroad shall be located at . . ."[9] (See Image 10.)

When the Olympia Terminal Railway was constructed in 1915 (it was sold to the Union Pacific Railroad in 1916), it used the P&PS grade as far north as the intersection of 11th Avenue and Chestnut Street. The old P&PS right-of-way, north of that point, remained idle. However, in later years, the Union Pacific Railroad installed two separate spurs in that area, both of which had small segments situated on Chestnut Street. The first formed the tail track of a wye (Y), with the tail running along Chestnut Street between 7th and 6th Avenues. The second came directly off the new track built in 1915 by the Olympia Terminal Railway. That spur originated at the intersection of 10th Avenue and Chestnut Street. It traveled straight north along Chestnut Street and served a


P&PS Grade
East Bay Drive
Chestnut Street
Budd's Inlet
37
16
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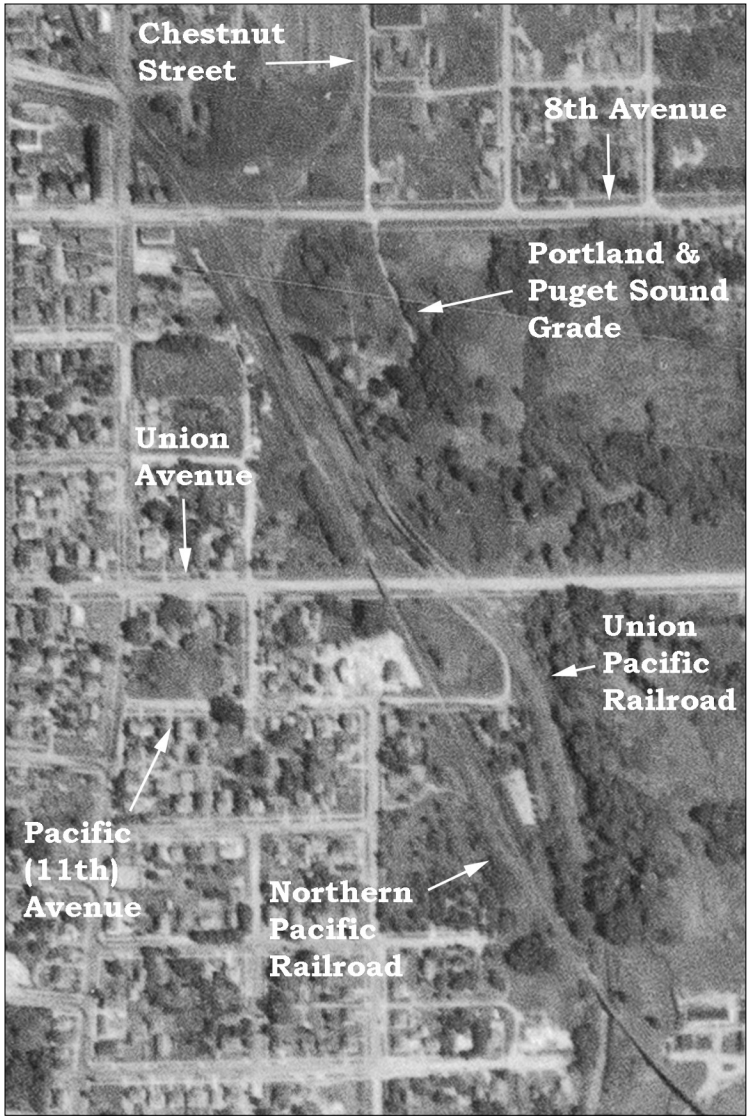


commercial building that was built (at some time between 1941 and 1947) on the southeast corner of 8th Avenue and Chestnut Street.

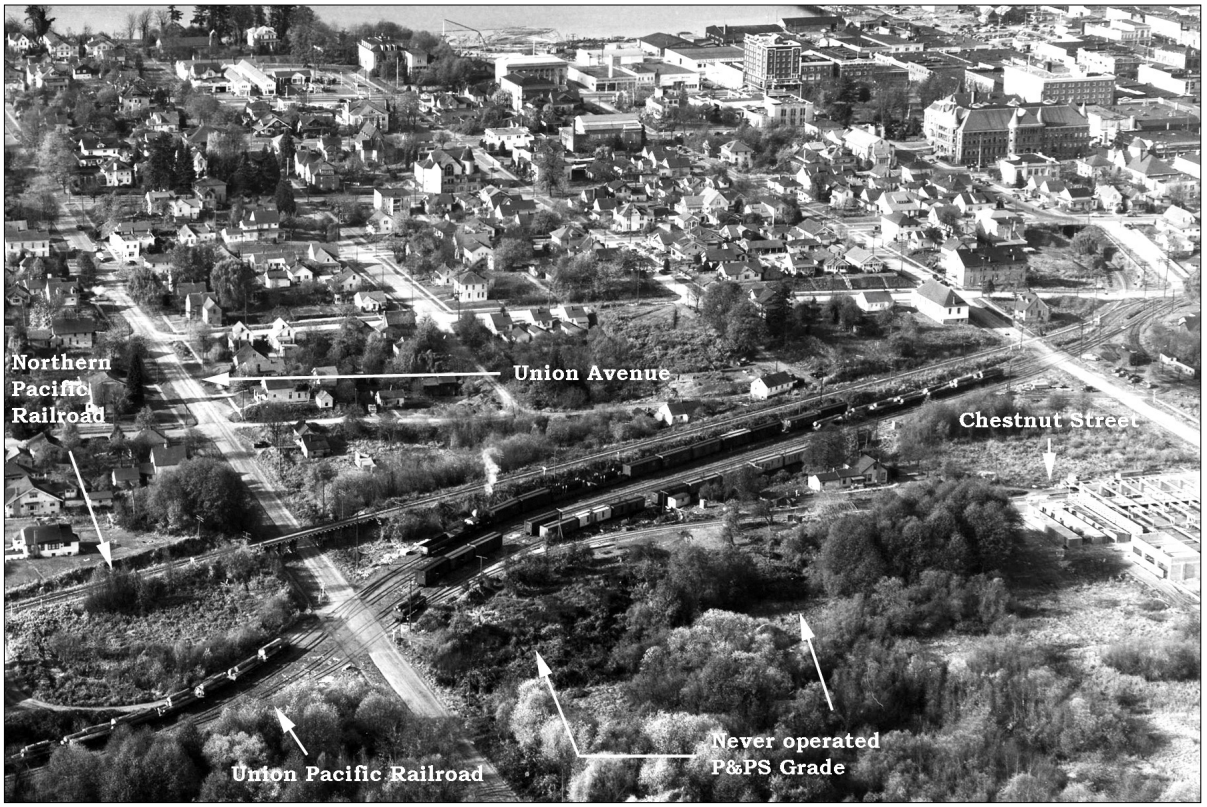
A bit of the never-operated P&PS grade could still be seen on a 1947 aerial photograph of the east side of Olympia. (See Image 12.)

The second Union Pacific Railroad spur along Chestnut Street was easily visible in a 1957 aerial photograph. In 2022, the location of that particular spur was under a parking lot. (See Image 13.)

Farther north, the P&PS grade curved to the northeast at the intersection of Chestnut Street and 3rd Avenue (now named State Avenue). Beyond the curve, the grade required fill material to be placed in the areas where it crossed, in 1890, the east side of the East Waterway. In the years since

***Opposite**: Image 10. Part of Image 1,* Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Olympia, Thurston County, Washington, *Sanborn Map Company, November 1924. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress. The P&PS right-of-way along Chestnut Street has been added by the author. A post-1916 wye (Y) built by the Union Pacific Railroad is visible. The tail track of the wye extended along Chestnut Street between 7th and 6th Avenues.*

***Above**: Image 11. A 1941 aerial photograph of the area around Chestnut Street. A short length of the never-used P&PS grade is visible south of 8th Avenue. Photograph courtesy of earthexplorer.usgs.gov.*



***Above**: Image 12. Part of a 1947 aerial photograph of Olympia showing the view toward the northwest. Faintly visible are remnants of the P&PS grade, north of the intersection between 11th Avenue and the original P&PS right-of-way. Photograph courtesy of the Washington State Archives.*

***Opposite**: Image 13. A 1957 aerial photograph of the area around Chestnut Street. The second Union Pacific Railroad spur can be seen. It stretched north along Chestnut Street. The old P&PS grade can no longer be identified. Photograph courtesy of earthexplorer.usgs.gov.*

then, dredging of the south end of East Bay, as far as Olympia Avenue, has removed that fill material. To the northeast, the grade reached what is now East Bay Drive at a position immediately south of the place where Prospect Avenue formerly connected with East Bay Drive. (See Image 14.)

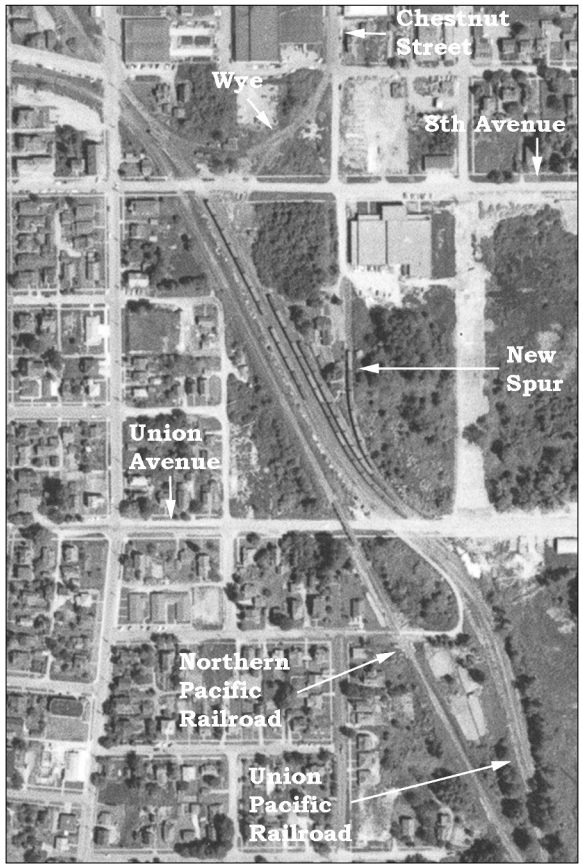
Continuing north, the P&PS right-of-way is now occupied by East Bay Drive as far north as Squaxin Park. There, the railroad grade curved northeast and much of it was used later in constructing Ames Road. It is strongly suspected, but cannot be verified, that the route used by the P&PS

along Ames Road was the previous location of a tram railway used by Isaac "Ike" Ellis to bring logs to Ellis Cove.[10] (See Image 15.)

A cut excavated during construction of the P&PS can be seen in the woods across the street from the house at 1103 Ames Road. (See Image 16.)

North and east of Ames Road, the graded right-of-way of the P&PS can also be found in several places. (See Image 17.)

The graders constructing the P&PS grade dug quite a deep cut in the vicinity of Lemon Road. (See Images 18 and 19.)



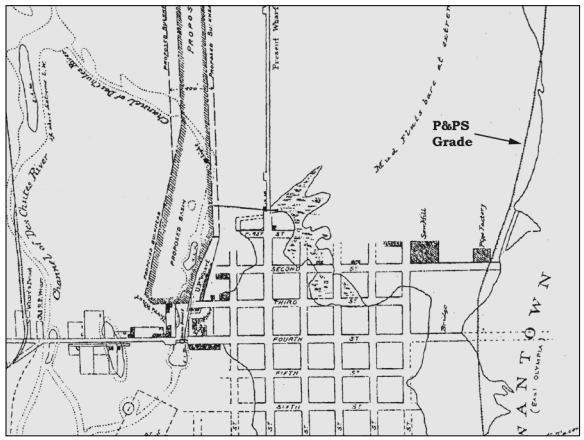
Another cut can be seen on both sides of Schinke Road at a position between 3810 and 4033 Schinke Road. The unfinished remnant of a large fill project can be seen on the west side of 4809 Johnson Point Road. (See Images 20 and 21.)

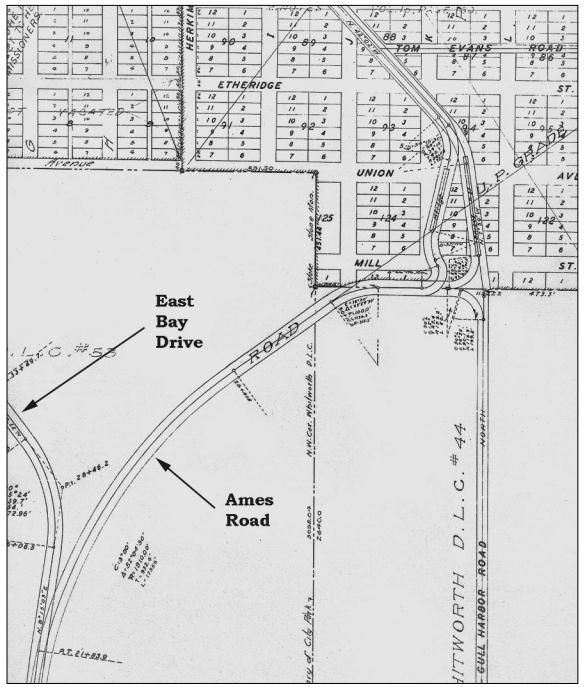
Several parcels of land were secured by the P&PS along Nisqually Reach. However, examination of aerial photographs and LiDAR ground imaging does not suggest that any grading or construction took place there.

The Post-1890 History of the P&PS Right-of-Way

Although the P&PS never operated as a railroad, portions of its surveyed right-of-way were repurposed and incorporated into other Thurston County roads and railroads. The following narration may be used to locate those areas.

An article in the May 24, 1892 *Morning Olympian* reported two controversies related to the P&PS grade. Both involved disputes with the Olympia Light & Power Company. The first concerned a difference in grade level between the trolley right-of-way on Fourth Street (now Fourth Avenue) and P&PS's non-operating grade on Chestnut Street. The second controversy concerned a plan by the Olympia Light & Power Company to place its right-of-way on the ridge over the unfinished P&PS tunnel located be-





tween the north side of Tumwater and the east side of Olympia.

The article reported: "The City Council, at an adjourned meeting Monday, took up the Chestnut street railway controversy. The Olympia Light & Power Company desires to construct its [trolley] track from Fourth street to its proposed car building on Chestnut street on an up-grade, or if this cannot be obtained, then on a level. Existing grades on streets south of Fourth would, if conformed to on Chestnut, make the grade a down one. The proposed Union Pacific grade along the street is still lower than the Fourth street grade at the intersection with Chestnut."[11]

The article continued: "As bearing upon the published statement that the Union Pacific contemplates an abandonment of its line through Olympia, the following sworn denial of the company contained in a pleading filed on Saturday last in the suit against the Light & Power Company is of interest:

"'Plaintiff denies that it has no right, title or interest in law or equity, to the strip of land referred to in the com-

***Top**: Image 14. Part of the 1891* Olympia Harbor Washington Map Showing Proposed Improvements*, from a survey and examination made in February 1891 by B. W. De Courcy, Assistant Engineer, U.S. Engineer's Office, Portland, Oregon, published September 19, 1891. Image courtesy of the Washington State University Libraries.*

***Bottom**: Image 15. Part of a survey of northeast Olympia including East Bay Drive, Ames Road, and Gull Harbor Road. The P&PS right-of-way is designated as "U. P. Grade." Image courtesy of Thurston County Roads & Transportation Services.*

plaint, or that the plaintiff abandoned its said route in the year 1890; and denies that it has ever abandoned said route. On the contrary, plaintiff alleges that it is, and always has been since said route was adopted, the purpose of plaintiff to resume work upon said line and route at an early date and as soon as possible.'

"To show that the tunnel plan is not impractical, and in fact it would be cheaper to bore the tunnel than to make an open cut, the Light & Power Company employed John G. Scurry, of Seattle, a railroad engineer of 25 years' experience, to look over the ground, and he has made an affidavit, which has been filed in the case, from which the following extract is taken:

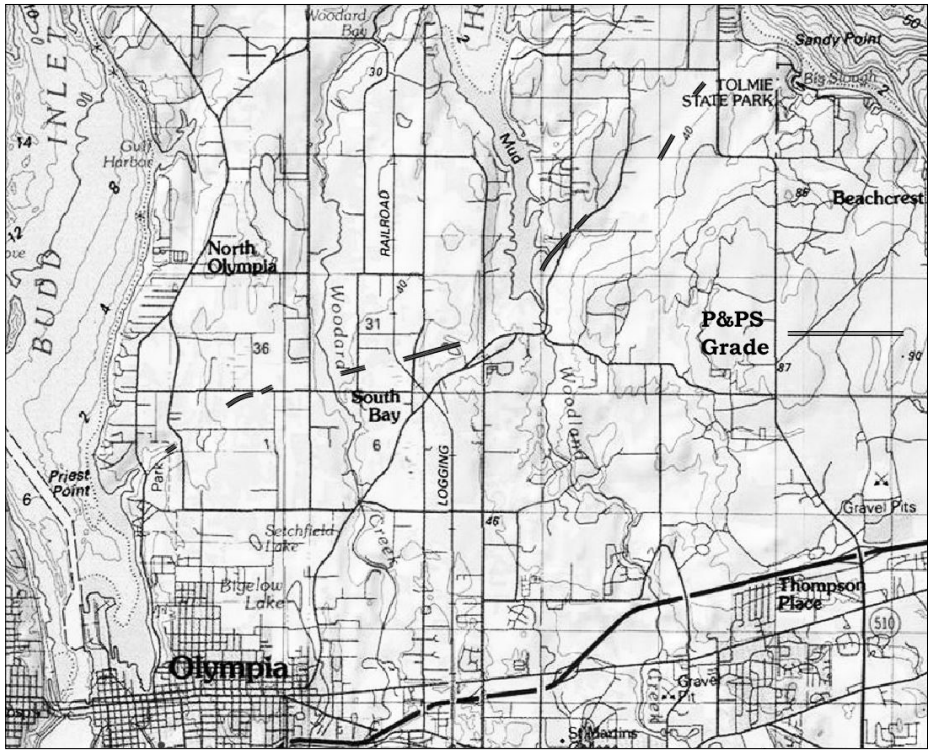
"'That from his knowledge as a civil engineer, and from the careful examination he has made of the premises aforesaid, affiant says that the plaintiff can and should make a tunnel through said ridge; that to do so is better work and more economical than to make an open cut through said ridge; that the difference in cost in making the tunnel and making an open cut is about $40 a foot in favor of the tunnel; that, as far as affiant could determine from said examination, affiant can see no difficulty in making said tunnel for said railroad through said ridge at said point; that the construction of said street railway along said ridge and across plaintiff's route at said point, and the operation of same, cannot be a damage, hurt or hindrance of any kind to plaintiff's proposed railroad.'"[12]

On March 29, 1898 the Seattle & Montana Railroad was incorporated at Seattle. Its stated purpose was to build a railroad from Vancouver, Washington to Blaine, Washington.[13] The line was a subsidiary of James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway.

In the first decade of the 20th Century, Hill, known as "The Empire Builder," and E. H. Harriman were fierce competitors. Each wanted to dominate rail transportation in the Pacific Northwest. Hill controlled both the Great Northern Railway and, by that time, the Northern Pacific Railroad. Harriman was president of the Union Pacific Railroad after 1903 and, between 1901 and 1909, he was also president of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Harriman's goal was the same as those who tried and failed to complete the P&PS; he wanted access to Puget Sound for the Union Pacific. Hill sought to thwart him. One of Hill's maneuvers was the formation of the Northwestern Improvement Company. It was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Northern Pacific. When formed in 1897, the Northwestern Improvement Company primarily managed coal mines at Roslyn and other pieces of real estate. However, it was also moderately successful in cloaking Hill's actual plan for his railroad empire. With that background, it is easier to understand the many complicated real estate transactions that occurred between 1901 and 1916.

On May 21, 1901 the Seattle & Mon-


Woodard Bay
Sandy Point
TOLMIE STATE PARK
Big Slough
Gull Harbor
BUDD INLET
Beachcrest
North Olympia
RAILROAD
Mud
P&PS Grade
Woodard
South Bay
LOGGING
Priest Point
Park
Setchfield Lake
Bigelow Lake
Gravel Pits
Thompson Place
Olympia
Gravel Pit
St Martins

tana Railroad (a subsidiary of the Great Northern) was awarded a portion of the P&PS right-of-way in Thurston County.[14]

On July 23, 1901, through a levy valued at $1,667,200, the Seattle & Montana Railroad obtained another part of the P&PS's Thurston County right-of-way.[15] Available records do not specify exactly what the levy represented. Perhaps it was the sum that the Great Northern had previously invested in the failed P&PS venture. It might also simply represent back taxes owed by the P&PS.

On January 23, 1902 the Portland & Seattle Railway was incorporated.[16] It was a joint venture between the two Hill lines (the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Great Northern Railway). The new railroad's name was designed by Hill to divert attention from the fact that its real purpose was to create a direct connection between Spokane and Portland.

By 1906, the Seattle & Montana Railroad had assigned all its interest in the P&PS right-of-way, in Thurston County, to the Northwestern Improvement Company. However, that assignment was not recorded in Thurston County. The deal was probably managed through the Great Northern, which, along with the Northern Pacific, had formed the Portland & Seattle Railway four years earlier.

On March 7, 1906 the Northwestern Improvement Company gained legal control over a part of the Thurston County P&PS right-of-way through a levy against the P&PS. The value of the levy was $1,417,186.[17]

On March 31, 1906, to recover unpaid taxes, the Treasurer of Thurston County sold the easternmost 23% of the entire P&PS right-of-way through Thurston County to the Northwestern Improvement Company. In various places, the parcel comprised the eastern, northern, or southern portion of the property.[18]

On June 16, 1906 the Northwestern Improvement Company sold part of the P&PS right-of-way in Thurston County to the Portland & Seattle Railway.[19]

On June 27, 1907 the Thurston County Sheriff transferred part of the Thurston County P&PS right-of-way to

***Opposite top**: Image 16. The view northeast from within the P&PS cut located in the woods north of Ames Road, across from 1103 Ames Road. In the distance is the residence at 1120 Ames Road. Author's 2006 photograph.*

***Opposite bottom**: Image 17. Locations northeast of Olympia where remnants of the P&PS grade can be observed on the ground. This image was prepared using the LiDAR layer of the US Geological Survey map. Several of these locations have been confirmed by reconnaissance in person. Image courtesy of USGS.*

the Portland & Seattle Railway.[20]

In January 1908 "Spokane" was added to the name of the Portland & Seattle Railway, making it the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway. This happened after it became obvious that the line was being built from Vancouver, Washington toward Spokane, rather than toward Seattle.[21]

On March 28, 1912 the Olympia Terminal Railway attempted to obtain part of the former P&PS right-of-way through Thurston County from the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway by appropriation.[22] A Decree of Appropriation for these properties was granted to the Olympia Terminal Railway by the Superior Court of the State of Washington on September 7, 1912.[23]

On August 14, 1912 the Olympia Terminal Railway filed a lis pendens suit against the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway. The case attempted to obtain the center ten feet of the P&PS right-of-way through Thurston County.[24]

On July 1, 1913 the Olympia Southern Railway (another organization that was attempting to build a railroad serving Olympia) filed a separate lis pendens suit against the Olympia Terminal Railway. The case was an attempt to secure the P&PS right-of-way from a point on the existing Milwaukee Railroad mainline, west of Maytown, to the southern border of Thurston County.[25] That suit was unsuccessful.

On July 4, 1913 the *Washington Standard* reported: "NEW RAILROAD IS SEEKING OLD U. P. GRADE NEAR HERE - Olympia Southern Company, Just Incorporated, Starts Condemnation Suits – Willapa Harbor Prize? – Articles Make Puget Sound One Terminal – Concern is Capitalized at $100,000. Condemnation suits to obtain title to all of the old Union Pacific grade in the southern part of Thurston County from the point where it crosses the Milwaukee tracks nine miles outside of Olympia to the county line, were filed in the local superior court this week following the incorporation of the Olympia Southern railway by F. R. Brown of this city and B. H. Rhodes of Centralia. The company is capitalized at $100,000, the papers being filed Tuesday.

"The company is authorized to construct either a steam or interurban line, but local reports have it that it is to be a steam railroad tapping the

***Opposite top**: Image 18. The view west at a position approximately 90 feet north of the driveway for the residence at 3726 Lemon Road. Author's 2006 photograph.*

***Opposite bottom**: Image 19. The view east at a position approximately 90 feet north of the driveway for the residence at 3726 Lemon Road. Author's 2006 photograph.*

Willapa Harbor country. The articles of incorporation provide for a line from the southern end of Puget Sound—Olympia—to the Columbia river in Cowlitz or Clarke county, passing through Centralia and Chehalis. Mr. Brown, the local incorporator, was at one time owner of the Westside Mill, recently purchased by the McCleary timber company."[26]

On August 12, 1913 the Olympia Terminal Railway sold much of the P&PS right-of-way, between the area west of Maytown and the southern border of Thurston County, to the Puget Sound & Willapa Harbor

***Top**: Image 20. The view northwest at 4809 Johnson Point Road. A large, probably unfinished fill can be seen to the left of the structure at that address. Author's 2006 photograph.*

***Bottom**: Image 21. The view southwest at 4846 Johnson Point Road. The visible driveway occupies a substantial cut made in 1890 during construction of the P&PS. Unseen in the distance is Johnson Point Road. Author's 2006 photograph.*

Railway, a construction railroad controlled by the Milwaukee Railroad.[27] This effectively ended the attempt of the Olympia Southern Railway to acquire that part of the former P&PS right-of-way.

On September 16, 1913 B. H. Rhodes of Centralia, one of the incorporators of the Olympia Southern Railway, sold the portion of the P&PS which he owned personally (all of which was located in Lewis County) to the Puget Sound & Willapa Harbor Railway.[28]

The November 14, 1913 *Washington Standard* reported: "O.-W. R. & N. WILL SPEND $1,000,000 ON NEW ROAD INTO OLYMPIA – Harriman Line to Build Terminals – Will Develop City as Exporting Point—Assures Rapid Growth in Next Few Years – The announcement for which Olympians have been watching and waiting for several weeks came unexpectedly from Portland last Saturday when it was stated that the O.-W. R. & N. railroad company had appropriated $1,000,000 for the construction of a branch line from the Tenino-Point Defiance cut-off eight miles into Olympia and would begin construction in January, added that it would take over the holdings of the Olympia Terminal Railway, had already bought considerable terminal property here, and would buy more. Announcement was made at the same time of the company's intention to spend $4,000,000 in constructing a line from Centralia to Willapa Harbor."[29]

This project was completed and became part of the Union Pacific Railroad. It connected the port area of Olympia with the Union Pacific's Chambers Prairie station at East Olympia. It used the old P&PS grade from a place immediately south of Custer Way, in Tumwater, to the intersection of 11th Avenue and Chestnut Street, in Olympia.

The June 12, 1914 *Washington Standard* reported: "MILWAUKEE TO COME – Strong Likelihood for Another Railroad to Olympia Soon – That there is a very strong likelihood that the Milwaukee railroad will be operating into Olympia within the next few months, bearing out rumors that have been persistent locally and making two new railroads for Olympia this year, is the opinion drawn from statements made here this week by J. F. Bahl of Seattle, special passenger agent of the Milwaukee railroad, during a business visit to Olympia Wednesday.

"'The construction of the O.-W. R. & N. to Olympia may mean one of two things to our line,' Mr. Bahl said, 'either that we will come in here over their road by a trackage agreement, or that we will build an independent road.'

"The fact that engineers for the Milwaukee have recently made surveys over the three-mile stretch from Fir Tree [at the end of the Milwaukee Railroad's proposed spur to the Fir Tree Lumber Company] to the Chambers' Prairie station where the O.-W.'s new line connects with the Pt. Defiance cut-off is taken to indicate that the Mil-

waukee contemplates using the latter's road into this city, though it is also known that the Milwaukee looks favorably on the purchase of the old U. P. grade between Maytown and Olympia, which would be used if an independent line were constructed."[30]

Thus, although the Milwaukee Railroad seriously considered obtaining the unused part of the dormant P&PS grade, from Tumwater in the north to the intersection of Case Road with Maytown Road, in the south, that project was never pursued. In the end, the Milwaukee never provided rail service to Olympia.

On October 6, 1914 one final parcel of P&PS right-of-way, in Tumwater, was transferred from the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway to the Olympia Terminal Railway.[31]

On December 15, 1914 the Northern Pacific Railroad's Point Defiance Line was opened for revenue traffic between Tenino and the Nisqually River. A joint operating agreement allowed usage by the Union Pacific Railroad, Great Northern Railway, and Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway. Significantly, none of the new Point Defiance Line utilized any of the old P&PS right-of-way.

On December 31, 1915 the Oregon-Washington Railway & Navigation Company (a subsidiary of Union Pacific) assumed operational control of the Union Pacific's Olympia Branch, which connected Union Pacific's Chambers Prairie Station at East Olympia with Olympia's port).[32] That segment of track utilized the P&PS grade between Tumwater and Chestnut Street in Olympia.

NOTES

[1] Jeff Asay, *Union Pacific Northwest, The Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Co.* (Edmonds, Washington: Pacific Fast Mail, 1991), pages 63-64.

[2] Secretary of State, Corporations and Trademarks, Articles of Incorporation Domestic Corporations, Articles of Incorporation for the Portland & Puget Sound Railroad, 0754-F filed November 8, 1889.

[3] "Team Shies Off the Bridge - Will Trosper's Horses Take Fifteen Foot Tumble and He Gets Badly Injured." *Morning Olympian*, July 8, 1904, page 1.

[4] "City News in Brief," *Washington Standard*, February 17, 1905, page 3.

[5] "Mere Mention," *Washington Standard*, December 19, 1890, page 3.

[6] "Mere Mention," *Washington Standard*, June 12, 1891, page 3.

[7] "Mere Mention," *Washington Standard*, May 30, 1890, page 3.

[8] City of Olympia, Ordinance 446, passed August 28. It repealed and replaced an earlier Ordinance #381, which had been passed May 5, 1890.

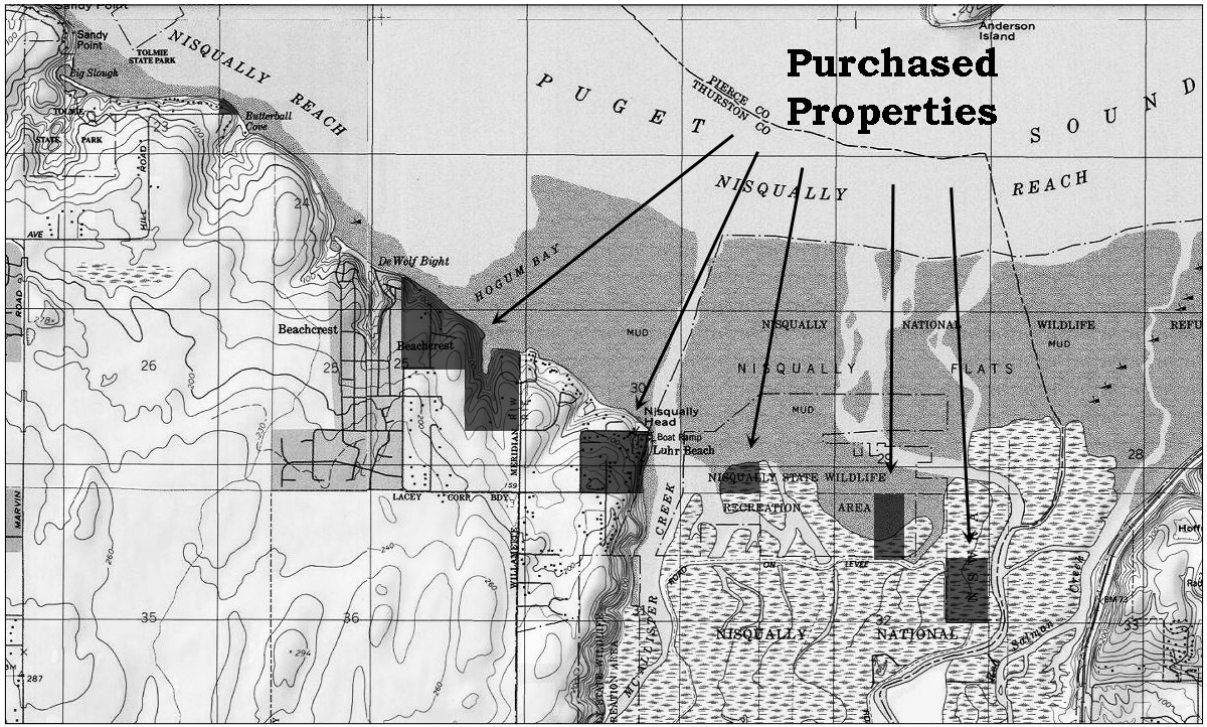


Image 22. Properties along Nisqually Reach which the P&PS purchased for the purpose of right-of-way construction. Compiled from deed records at the Washington State Archives. There is no evidence that grading was done on any of these parcels. Base map courtesy of the US Geological Survey.

[9] City of Olympia, Ordinance 396, passed June 6, 1890.

[10] Peter J. Replinger and James S. Hannum, MD, *Atlas of South Puget Sound Logging Railroads* (Olympia, WA: Hannum House Publications, 2022), page 157.

[11] "A Chestnut Question," *Morning Olympian*, May 24, 1892, page 4.

[12] "A Chestnut Question."

[13] Secretary of State, Corporations and Trademarks, Articles of Incorporation Domestic Corporations, Incorporation of the Seattle & Montana Railroad, March 29, 1898.

[14] Thurston County Deed Book 67, pages 127-128, dated June 22, 1907. The deed transfers part of the P&PS right-of-way in Thurston County from the Sheriff of Thurston County to the Portland & Seattle Railway. The document refers to a judgment rendered May 21, 1901 by the Superior Court of Washington, at Port Townsend, Washington. That judgment transferred a portion of the P&PS right-of-way in Thurston County to the Thurston

County Sheriff .

[15] Thurston County Levy File #21047, dated 23 July 1901, accessed by index only.

[16] Articles of Incorporation for the Portland & Seattle Railway, dated January 23, 1902.

[17] Thurston County Levy File #32378, dated March 7, 1906, accessed by index only.

[18] Thurston County Deed Book 62, page 173, dated March 31, 1906.

[19] Thurston County Deed Book 62, pages 383-404, dated June 16, 1906.

[20] Thurston County Deed Book 67, pages 127-128.

[21] "Important Articles Filed," *Morning Oregonian*, January 30, 1908, page 11.

[22] Thurston County Deed Book 82, pages 490-493, March 28, 1912.

[23] Thurston County Deed Book 83, pages 352-355, September 7, 1912.

[24] Thurston County Deed Book 83, pages 212-214, August 14, 1912.

[25] Thurston County Deed Book 84, pages 596-597, July 1, 1913.

[26] "New Railroad Is Seeking Old U. P. Grade Near Here," *Washington Standard*, July 4, 1913, page 2.

[27] Thurston County Deed Book 88, page 138, August 12, 1913.

[28] Lewis County Deed Book 123, page 600, September 17, 1913.

[29] "O.-W. R. & N. WILL SPEND $1,000,000 ON NEW ROAD INTO OLYMPIA," *Washington Standard*, November 14, 1913, page 1.

[30] "MILWAUKEE TO COME," *Washington Standard*, June 12, 1914, page 8.

[31] Thurston County Deed Book 91, page 116, October 6, 1914.

[32] Thurston Deed Book 93, page 605. The deed was signed December 31, 1915, and recorded September 8, 1916, for a sale price of $419,050.

Dr. Hannum is a retired physician and surgeon who spent his early years in Michigan. He arrived in western Washington in 1971 as a member of the U.S. Public Health Service. Railroad history has been a life-long interest, and he has written several books on the subject.